

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 p.m. in the recreation center. In his remarks, he referred to Norm Nielsen, president, Kirkwood Community College; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in his apartment in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in St. Charles, Missouri

July 20, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. I am proud to be back in Missouri, in this great city of St. Charles. John Ashcroft told me this morning that St. Charles was the first capital of Missouri. Today, the way things look, St. Charles is the capital of Bush-Cheney country. I always enjoy coming to the St. Louis area. You might remember the last time I was here, I brought my 30-mile-an-hour fastball. Now look at the Cardinals.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to let you know I've got more to do for this country, and I want your help. I want you to go to your community centers and your places of worship and your—all around this important part of the country and tell folks they have an obligation to vote. And you might remind them, if they want optimistic, hopeful, determined leadership, vote for George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

With your help, we carried Missouri in 2000. With your help, we'll carry Missouri in 2004 as a part of a great nationwide victory. So thanks for coming. My only regret is that Laura is not traveling with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [Laughter] And the reason why is because the people understand she is a great First Lady. And I understand I'm a lucky man to have such a fine person as my wife. Tonight I'll give you some reasons why you need to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason is so that Laura will have 4 more years.

I want to thank Madam Speaker for her kind introduction. Catherine, thank you for your leadership and your service. I want to thank my friend Matt Blunt. Good to see you, Governor. Peter Kinder is here, and I'm

proud Peter is here. I want to thank him for his friendship. Mike Gibbons, all those who serve at the State and local level, thank you for serving our communities and our country.

I particularly want to say thanks to the grassroots activists who are here, the unsung heroes who make all the phone calls and put up the signs and get people to register to vote and remind people that if they're interested in helping, they can get on the Internet at the georgewbush.com site. I'm counting on your help. I'm counting on your support. I'll lay out the vision. You get the people to the polls, and we'll have 4 more years.

And when you're convincing people to do their duty, remind them that the last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with the stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession, but we acted. We delivered historic tax relief, and over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. So we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is done and America is secure.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror, the spread of weapons of mass destruction. So we acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When our great Vice President, Dick Cheney, and I—when we came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated. So we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve, and today, nobody can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and the prosperity of America. You see, it is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. A President must make the hard decisions and keep his commitments. And with your help, that

is how I will continue to lead our great Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm looking forward to the contest, and it's going to be a hard race. That's why I'm here to ask for your help. I'm running against an experienced United States Senator.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in Washington a long time—long time. He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. [Laughter] He voted for the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the force—use of force in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq. [Laughter] If you disagree with the Senator on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. [Laughter]

And as you know, he's picked a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And he chose a fellow lawyer, who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [Laughter]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm asking for your vote because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend freedom and peace throughout the world. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan and strategy to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan to continue to rally the armies of compassion, the compassionate spirit of this country, so every single American has a chance to realize the great promise of our land. I'm asking for your help, and after 4 more years, America will be safer, stronger, and a better nation.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family is the Federal tax burden. By providing the largest—

Audience member. Oh, it's killing me! [Laughter]

The President. By providing the largest Federal tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we've left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

This economy of ours is strong, and it's getting stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we've added 1.5 million new jobs. In this great State, in the State of Missouri, 27,600 people went to work at a new job in June. Your unemployment rate is now 5.2 percent, down from 5.8 percent last July. The homeownership rate is at its alltime high. Business investment is up. Consumer confidence is strong. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponent looks at all this progress and somehow concludes that the sky is falling. [Laughter] Whether their message is delivered with a frown or a grin, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, more lawsuits, economic isolationism.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The surest way to end economic growth and to put Americans out of work is to adopt their vision. This Nation is on the path to progress and opportunity, and we're not going back. To sustain economic growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes would undermine growth and destroy jobs just as the economy is gaining more steam. To help grow the economy so people can find work, my message to Congress is: Do not raise taxes on the American people.

In order to make sure Americans can find work today and work tomorrow, we must be wise about how we spend the people's money. My plan calls for spending discipline. It calls for setting clear priorities. I also understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. We don't spend the Government's money; we spend the people's money.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow and people can find work, we must stop the frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at

the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I will continue to push the United States Congress to reform the legal system to end the junk and frivolous lawsuits that plague our small businesses.

In order to make sure we continue to expand our job base, I have a plan to help more Americans afford health insurance, by giving people better access to health care through association health plans, giving Americans more control over their health care through tax-free health savings accounts. And to make sure that people have got affordable and available health care, we need medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

In order to make sure people can find work today and tomorrow, we need to pass sound energy legislation. I have proposed a plan to the United States Congress over 2 years ago. It is a plan that calls for more conservation. It's a plan that says we will develop renewable sources of energy. It's a plan that says we must modernize our electricity grid. It's also a plan that recognizes we can explore and use resources in the United States in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake national security and for the sake of economic security, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I know we've got some farmers here. Thanks for working the land. The best way to make sure you continue—your prosperity continues is to sell your products overseas. The best way to make sure we've got jobs today and tomorrow is to make sure countries treat us like we treat them. We open our markets to their products; they open their markets to our product—American compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the playing field is level.

To sustain economic growth, we need to make sure you reelect a pro-small-business, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer administration. And that is the Bush-Cheney administration.

America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong. We still

face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation, the people of America resolved to fight the terrorists where they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy; Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first times in their lives.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world and had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq is free and a sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator now sits in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget. And it is a lesson this country must never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. With this lesson in mind, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and the United States Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our Government.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. And as he had for decades—for over a decade, he deceived the world. As he had for over a decade, he refused to comply.

So I had a choice to make: Either trust the word of a madman, or take action to defend our country. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Although we have not found the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction that we thought were there, we were right to go into Iraq. America is safer because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have important and difficult work to do. Our immediate task in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere is to capture or kill the terrorists. You can't talk sense to the terrorists. You cannot negotiate with these terrorists. You cannot sit back and hope for the best. We will engage these enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world, so we do not have to face them here at home.

In this big, sweet country of ours, there's no such thing as perfect security, and the threats to this homeland are real. We know that the terrorists want to strike the United States again. They want to disrupt our way of life or cause panic or great fear. We reorganized this Government of ours to better protect the people. There's much better communication now between the Federal, State, and local governments. The FBI has changed its mission to make sure—changed its priorities to make sure that counterterrorism is the most important thing they do.

I want you to know there are a lot of really good people working on your behalf—good, decent, honorable people. I know you'll join me in thanking the police and firefighters and emergency teams of St. Louis, Missouri.

Over these next 4 years, we will defend our homeland. Over the next 4 years, we'll be relentless in the pursuit of the enemy abroad. Yet in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty, the hopelessness, and the resentments that terrorists can exploit.

See, life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women

can choose their own leaders, when the people can decide their own future. You see, by serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others. And that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

America is leading the world, and the world is changing because of our leadership. Three years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Now, the camps are closed; democracy is rising; and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now, Pakistan forces are rounding up the terrorists. Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were moving with little opposition. Now, the Saudi Government has taken the fight to Al Qaida, and Americans are safer for it. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment, and the American people are safer for it.

Three years ago, there was a network run by a Pakistan nuclear scientist named A.Q. Khan that was selling secrets, nuclear secrets to countries like Iran and North Korea and Libya. Thanks to the hard work of CIA agents, thanks to cooperation between the British and United States Government, that network has been dismantled. It is no longer a problem, and America is safer for it.

In the last 3 years, the world is changing for the better, just like Iraq is changing for the better. We will finish our work of spreading democracy and helping the Iraqis achieve democracy. We'll finish our work to help the Afghan citizens achieve democracy. Democratic states, free states are peaceful states. It's in our long-term interest that these countries survive, and we've got good allies there. President Karzai believes in the future of the people of Afghanistan. Prime Minister Alawi believes in the future of the people of Iraq. He wants there to be a free country, just like the fathers and mothers of Iraqi children

want their children to grow up in a free and peaceful country.

People in Iraq are stepping up. They understand the stakes. They're fighting the foreign fighters and the terrorists. They're bringing them to justice so they can live in a free society. And the people of those countries can count on the United States of America. When we give our word, when we'll stay with people striving to become a free society, we will keep our word.

America is safer not only because we've led; America is safer because we've got a great United States military. At bases around our country and around the world, I have had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our freedom. I've seen their great decency, their unselfish courage. And I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

And we must make sure those who wear our uniform have the best training, the best pay, and the best equipment. That's why last September, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, for ammunition, for fuel, for spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against that legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying, quote, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] End quote. That sure clears things up. [Laughter] Now, he's offering a different explanation. Last week, Senator Kerry said he's proud that he and his runningmate voted against funding for the troops. Later he said his vote against funding for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan was a complicated matter. [Laughter]

There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. Over the next 4 years as the Commander in Chief, I will see to it our troops have the best possible pay, equipment, and training.

America is leading this world with confidence and moral clarity. We've got a lot of fine folks helping us too. There's over 60 na-

tions involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I'll continue to work with allies such as Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi and Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan, to work together to protect our peoples and to spread freedom and democracy. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other nations.

This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. Earlier this month, my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places like St. Charles, Missouri.

Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We are strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools. We stand for local control of schools. We stand for strong accountability in schools, so no child is left behind in America. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and everybody matters. We stand for institutions like marriage and family. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We are building a culture of responsibility in America. We're changing the culture of America from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the

education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it, like supporting your teachers. If you are a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, in a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats who shouted at me, "Whatever it takes." Either a fireman or a policeman grabbed me and said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend our country, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been a witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops, seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. We've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you, sir. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:31 p.m. at the Family Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Catherine L. Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State house of representatives; Missouri gubernatorial candidate Matt Blunt; State Senators Peter Kinder

and Michael R. Gibbons of Missouri; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Vote on the Nomination of Bill Myers To Be a Judge on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

July 20, 2004

Today a minority of Senators once again used obstructionist filibuster tactics to block a vote on an outstanding nominee to the United States Court of Appeals. Bill Myers has had a distinguished career as a public servant and practicing attorney and enjoys widespread support from across the political spectrum, yet he has been denied a simple up-or-down vote.

These tactics are unfair to Bill Myers and unfair to the American people. Bill Myers has the support of a bipartisan majority of Senators and would be confirmed if given an up-or-down vote. He would be an asset to the Ninth Circuit, which is seriously overworked and in need of more judges. He would fill a seat that has been designated a judicial emergency by the Judicial Conference of the United States. More Americans will be denied speedy access to our justice system by the obstruction of a few.

I continue to call on the minority in the Senate to stop playing politics with the American judicial system and give judicial nominees the fair treatment they deserve and the American people expect.

Remarks on Signing the Project BioShield Act of 2004

July 21, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Mr. Speaker. Please be seated. Thanks. Good morning, and welcome to the Rose Garden.

On September the 11th, 2001, America saw the destruction and grief terrorists could inflict with commercial airlines turned into